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GROUP WORK

PUBLIC HEALTH AND WELFARE TECHNICAL BULLETIN

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1. General

The basic material used in the two seminars in group work given at the Osaka College of Social Work and the Japan School of Social Work is presented in this Bulletin for the interest of Welfare Officers. This material has been translated into Japanese and is available from the Ministry of Education. The Primer of Group Work in Japan is available from the two schools of social work. All students in the seminars were given this material in Japanese. It is emphasized that this material is in a form of simple, basic principles applicable to any type of group including institutions and settlements. It is not for the treatment of problem children, but assumes that the individuals in the group are able to make average group adjustment.

Bibliographies may be obtained from the following sources:

Bibliography on Group Work
Published by American Association of Group Workers
134 East 56th Street
New York 22, New York (25¢)

Bibliography on Group Therapy
Published by American Group Therapy Association
228 East 19th Street
New York 3, New York (40¢)

Bibliography for Recreation Workers
National Recreation Association
315 Fourth Avenue
New York, New York (5¢)

2. Characteristics of Groups

Life today is lived in groups. We all belong to various kinds of groups - family, work, school, recreational, etc. This is natural and good. Man is a social animal and reaches his highest development in association with others. Even if it were possible for a person to survive physically in isolation, the average individual could not survive psychologically. Therefore, we must learn

how to live and act harmoniously and benefically in groups. This means that we must learn control, self abnegation, willingness to cooperate and to share, respect for the rights of others, and many other more or less difficult practices. Some people have achieved these to a high degree, - others in lesser degree. Most of us would be happier and find greater satisfaction in our daily relationships with others if we had had more specific training in this regard.

Children are born egocentric, and infants regard as good anything that contributes to their physical needs. If this comfort is not prompt in forthcoming, the infant protests. As he grows older, he learns he must share his mother with others who make demands on her time and attention. This is usually a painful and hard lesson. Later, the child wishes to have the companionship and attention of others. He would like to have this entirely on his own terms - to be able to eat, touch, or play with anything that catches his fancy. However, he gradually learns that others have their rights, too. An adult who has not grasped this idea we term "infantile".

The child's first group is, hopefully, his own family. As each family differs in its ideas, compositon and pattern, so each child differs. His next group is usually that of his play group, ordinarily composed of children who live in the same neighborhood. As he goes to school he enters another and different kind of group His circle of playmates is enlarged.

a. Collective Urge. At about the age of seven (in America) the average child is willing to give up consistently some of his own selfish behavior in order to have companions of his own age. He has learned to "take turns", to share his belongings, to distinguish between reality and fantasy. He has also learned something about life and its system of rewards and deprivation. He knows a little about the influence that stronger individuals exert over weaker ones. He is still strongly egocentric but he is willing at times to put the interests of others, especially those he likes, ahead of his own.

It is at this age, then - approximately seven years - that acceptance by his contemporaries takes on a new importance to him. It is also a significant milestone for those of us who are interested in his social education.

This seeking out of acceptance we call social hunger and it is felt by all normal individuals. Unless a person has social hunger we cannot work effectively with him in a group. The desire to belong to a group increases and probably is strongest between the ages of eleven and fifteen - again, these figures are approximate, and based on studies of children in North and South America. During this period, the child will join almost any kind of a group and often with little conscious motivation. The collective urge is very pronounced. As the adolescent emergesfrom this period he is less inclined to join a group unless he sees in it some distinct advantage - the opportunity to do something or learn something which he cannot accomplish so well alone. The average adult has a well defined, well thought out reason for affiliating himself with any group.

We used to think the collective urge faded out after adolescence but in the last ten years experiments in group work have been made (in Chicago, Cleveland, New York, Philadelphia and other cities) with elderly people, especially those who feel alone in the world. It was found that when people pass their sixties, the need for class group association is felt strongly once more. Workers with this age group have reported that the characteristics exhibited in group meetings by these elderly men and women more nearly resemble those of early adolescence than any other age group.

b. Types of Groups. The groups of which we have been speaking may be "natural" or "formed" groups. That is to say, they may or may not be formed by an outside agent or organization. We think of the family and early play groups as "natural" groups. We think of groups whose formation has been fostered by an organization such as the Scouts as "formed" group. Some people because of fortunate accidents find the means to good social education in natural groups. However, the needs of the individual in this regard are too important to be left to chance. Many persons have unhappy family situations, others fall into the companionship of those whose influence may be destructive. The child in an unsupervised play group, because he is bigger and physically stronger than his playmates, often gets the idea that his might makes right. His playmates may accept this idea, also, and it is hard to say whether they or he suffer most as a consequence. In any case, it is not a concept that we wish to promulgate in a free democratic society, where right is determined by other means than those of force or superior strength.

c. Methodology. There are many methods of social education among which group work is one. In group work we make use of the individual's normal desire to be accepted by his associates. The group itself becomes the tool of education, by means of which we try to influence the development of each person in the group. This means that there is a knowledge and conscious use of the interaction among group members being utilized by someone charged with this specific responsibility.

This person may be known as the "leader" "Advisor" or "group worker". He observes that each person who joins or leaves the group has an effect upon the group - more or less, depending upon the strength of that individual. He knows that each member reacts in some way to every other, that each affects the group as a whole and is in turn affected by it. These interactions we call group processes, and take place in all natural and in some formed groups. Unless they go on we do not have a group in the true sense. We know that some collections of individuals cannot be unified, and cannot experience the feeling of unity, without which the group cannot stay together, and therefore, disintegrates. As we study the dynamics of group process we understand what essentials must be found in the feeling of the group, if it is to be used as an educational instrument

We have seen that at about the age of seven the urge to belong to a more-or-less stable, well defined group is felt. Therefore, in group work we begin our education of children at about this age. There is another reason for beginning

at about this time. Supervised recreation has demonstrated its worth in combating juvenile delinquency. We know from studies made in the field that the onset of juvenile delinquency takes place before the age of nine. In other words, those who are likely to be branded as "juvenile delinquents" in later years give some warning of their future behavior by the time they are nine. Therefore, those interested in the prevention of juvenile delinquency should give time and attention to children at the time problem behavior symptoms are incipient.

We previously pointed out that the collective urge or desire-to-be-in-a-group is strongest between the ages of 11 and 15. Therefore, we would expect group work to be most effective within this age range.

As the adolescent becomes an adult he is less malleable. It is difficult to change his habits, attitudes and values, much less his basic personality structure. Only something which reaches far deeper than ordinary group association can do this. Adult groups which provide wholesome recreational, intellectual or social action programs act as outlets for habits and attitudes already learned and are praiseworthy for this purpose. They enrich the lives of countless persons but it is doubtful if such programs can be strictly classified as group work in the specific sense of a technical process. At present, we have no evidence to testify to the fact that group work is a successful technique in the re-education of adults between the ages of twenty and sixty. The studies made with elderly people are as yet too sparse to give detail as to results in that age group.

We do have evidence from psychiatric studies that some personality distortions and abberrations could have been prevented by careful guidance of the child by an adequately trained adult. Since adult leaders of children's leisure time groups, camp counsellors, scout leaders, etc., are notably recognized as having great influence over the children they guide, it is hoped that extensive and thorough training made available to such persons will have a far reaching effect on the youth of the world, and the citizenry of the future. "Character" education as it is sometimes called, to distinguish it from the mastery of a subject like mathematics or languages, seems, from a long view, to have the greater importance to the common welfare. The discoveries of science are beneficial to the world only in ratio to the use made of them, and this use is determined, not by the availability of the product, or the need of mankind for it, but by the personal qualities of those who control its production.

Let it not be thought that we claim for group work a sole or superior methods of "character" training. It is only one of the many methods now in use, but one which could be utilized far more effectively than it has been to date. It is heavily dependent on cultural traditions and moral codes.

d. Group Specifications. In order to use group work most effectively we need some specifications as to the kind of group which has seemed to produce the best results. First of all, the attendance of the group must be voluntary on the part

of each member. Each member joins the group of his own free will and may discontinue coming to meetings whenever he loses interest. There is no penalty attached to his dropping out, save loss of membership in the group. The unsupervised play group and the formed group or club can fulfill the qualification completely, in a way that a family, school or work group cannot. The reason attendance must be voluntary seems fairly obvious. If we are to expect maximum results from group work the readiness to participate must be felt by the persons to be educated. A person who enrolls in a group or attends a meeting unwillingly, or not entirely by his own choice may bring an attitude or resistance, passivity, or irresponsibility in regard to the activities of the group.

e. Size. The group should be small in number. It is impossible to say exactly how many people would constitute an ideal group for educational purposes because the KIND of personalitites involved affect the program more than the number. However, we may set the number at about twelve - more or less - as an indication of what we mean by "small". Smaller groups have been highly successful. It is comparatively easy to find meeting places for small groups and to move them about on trips, excursions and such outings. It is possible for the members to know each other well. It is easier in a small group for shy or reticent persons to participate fully. Most important, attitudes and opinions are more easily voiced and changed and since we are using the group meeting as a medium of education, we must provide opportunity for this.

This is not meant to disparage the need for large group gatherings for certain purposes. It is merely to state that for our specific purpose the small group has proven best.

f. Frequency. The group must meet frequently. In a child's group this means at least once a week. With older people, it may mean once or twice a month. The more frequent the meeting the more opportunity the group has to influence its members. As they build bonds of friendship, they feel accountable to one another for their activities, not only during the meetings but between times. This puts an added check on the personal conduct of each member. Obviously, a group which meets once or twice a year has no such hold on its members.

Given this small, frequently meeting group, to which people come voluntarily, we must stipulate in even further detail how best to derive its maximum benefits. Certain further specifications are necessary to insure a stable, harmonious group that will be most productive of the things we hope from it..

g. Homogeneity. The members of the group must be alike in at least a number of ways. This likeness among members we call homogeneity. The factor may be related t a wide variety of things - economic condition, vocation, experience with democracy, I.Q., physical skill, etc. A group of fourteen-year old Japanese boys, all of whom are Buddhists, we would see immediately was homogeneous in regard to age, nationality, sex and religion. These items are more easily determined than those previously mentioned. However, the former may be more important to the adult who finds

himself in the role of advisor to such a group. Depending on the activities and purpose of the group, certain points of homogeneity become more or less important than others. These factors add to or subtract from the smooth functioning of the group. With children the age factor is usually very important. A child of twelve has interests quite different from a child of seven. Therefore, we usually find that children work best in groups with a narrow age range - two or three years difference between the oldest and youngest members. However, in adult groups the difference of five or ten years between members is scarcely felt.

h. Program of activities. In a later discussion we shall elaborate on the kind of activities employed in group work and how program building takes place. Suffice it say here, then, that since we are using group work as a method of social education it naturally follows that the activities must be good in themselves, that they cannot be contrary to the law, nor destructive of the common good. Within this limitation, they may be anything the group wishes. All programs are planned by the group and leader working together, and must reflect the needs and interests of the group. Equal opportunity must be given to all persons for participation.

i. Leadership. This subject will also be discussed at length later, in regard to the concept of leadership in a democratic group and the personal qualities needed for such leadership. The leader, in order to be considered a group worker, must obviously be aware of the ways by which the group processes may be utilized.

j. Atmosphere. The general atmosphere must be a warm, friendly informal one. This means that an air of freedom, hospitality and cooperation will pervade it. Unless a person feels comfortable in a group he can ot make his best contribution to it. He cannot develop social attitudes in an atmosphere that is hostile or sterile. Although there is always opportunity for disagreement in a democratic group, it does not necessarily follow that there is bitterness or resentment. Harmony must prevail. Unity, not uniformity is the keynote. The general tone of the group as well as its program of activities, must be one in which the members take pride. Otherwise, we cannot expect it to act as a lever, in raising them to a higher level.

k. Code of behavior. As the members feel pride in belonging to the group, and identifying their interests with one another's, a code of behavior develops. Sometimes, this is explicit and written down for new members to follow, as in the Scout laws. In other groups it is implicit but none the less powerful. Groups whose ways and means are directed toward socially desirable goals develop a code of ethics which hold members to a higher standard of conduct than they would be likely to attain if they were not members of the group. Underworld "gangs" and groups of delinquents have also powerful codes of behaviour but since they are directed toward anti-social goals their effect on the character of the members is questionable. Loyalty to the group code varies with individuals but has high prestige value both within and outside of the group.

1. Objectives of group work. As we have noted previously the ultimate objective of group work is the development of the individual by means of the group. This objective does not necessarily exist in the minds of the members, but is always foremost in the mind of the group worker. The group itself determines the immediate objectives, and these must be well understood by all members.

The group worker, in working for the fullest development of each individual, has the responsibility of knowing each member well, and guiding the group processes in the needs and interests of all the members of the group. This is a difficult and intricate task. He is trying to teach them how to get along well with others, and to work out satisfactory relationships, in the hope that these will carry over from this particular group to other settings, such as family, school and work group. He is trying to teach the group as a whole how to act as an effective Unit in a democratic society. He has both individual and group goals continually in mind. While he develops the "group spirit" he tries to instill a sense of right values, the power to choose, and a feeling of responsibility for one's own and other's actions. At the same time he recognizes the right of the individual to solve his own problems, and to be different from those around him, as well integrated individuals are "different" when they develop their unique gifts and talents to the fullest for the benefit of society. The group worker aids the individual in acquiring a sense of reality, as he measures his ownstrength and limitations with others in the group.

The group, meanwhile has determined, with the help of the leader, what its own objectives are. These may be purely recreational. The members come together for enjoyment and refreshment -physical or cultural, as in a sports club, a music or photography club, or to practice conversation in a foreign language. The cultivation of worthwhile hobbies and the wise use of leisure time are good educational objectives. The leader may see in such programs excellent opportunities for teaching, better health habits, good sportsmanship, love of the artistic, etc. The group may set as the objective service to others - to the community, to needy persons etc. It may study social problems, plan and execute social action. This again would be quite in keeping with the general and primary objective of group work.

The group may have set for itself as a goal the acquisition of skills or knowledge useful in daily life. All these things are good, and foster the kind of atmosphere in which personal guidance may be given by the group worker.

Some groups have a multiplicity of objectives. Children's groups especially are likely to, and probably should have, the kind of program that embraces all the above objectives. The emphasis may change and vary according to the age and interest of the members. There is no limit to the number of objectives a group may have, but they should be within reasonable assurance of attainment and known and desired by all the members. Groups fail at times when the objectives are set by an outside agent and do not reflect the interests of the group. They may fail if the membersare over ambitious or immature in their planning and set objectives for which facilities are totally lacking or beyond reach of the group.

. In orgaizing new groups it is best to have only a few definite objectives, based on needs felt by the group, and toward which immediate and expert guidance can be given. A few persons, well organized, and clear as to their objective and the means to attain it, can be far more effective than a hundred persons who have only a vague set of goals and no real plan or assurance of accomplishment.

3. Consideration Regarding Leadership

The word "leader" in English has a meaning sufficiently distinctive that it is difficult to find an exact equivalent in other languages. Perhaps that is because it has acquired a connotation that implies certain qualities and techniques over and above the literal translation of the word. When we speak of a "leader" we do not mean one who uses cruelty, force or violence to compel people to do his will. We do not mean a person who tells people what to do. That type of individual we refer to as a dictator or tyrant. By "leader" we mean someone whom people follow confidently and freely. The word is not used as a title as would be "President", "Chairman", "Director," etc. All such people are in positons of leadership but may or may not be leaders in the sense of the word as described above. A true leader is always in a position to influence people but at any one time he may not be holding an office which carries a formal title. For example, a man may be a leader in the neighborhood where he lives. The people of the neighborhood hold him in high esteem but if there is no formal organization of the neighborhood he does not have a title, nor any explicit responsibilities.

The world has great need of more good leaders. We never have had enough of them. Where a leader steps forward, many are willing to follow, but comparatively few are prepared or able to take that first step out ahead of the crowd.

One cannot become a leader merely by reading about techniques of leadership any more than one can become a swimmer or a violinist. The study of theory helps but one must above all practice. Where can one get this practice? Obviously, only in a group.

Nor does one develop suddenly into a leader, at the age of, let us say 21 or 30. The practice must begin with one's early group experiences.

a. Development of Leaders. In group work, then, we have an ideal training ground for group leaders. We must plan more systematically than has ever been done to guide the group life of children so that as adults they will be willing and able to assume the responsibilities of leadership.

When children come into a group work program at about the age of seven we note that they already possess varying abilities as leaders. Where have they developed these? At home, in their play groups and in association with their schoolmates -- usually by chance. They have discovered ways of influencing other children. They have developed some techniques of doing this -- both good and bad techniques. The adult advisor looks over the group and notes the range of leader-

ship ability, the misconceptions, the faulty habits. It is the adult's job, then, to work with all the children in the group, to strengthen good ideas of influence, to eradicate bad ones. Since the children are so young they are extremely teachable. Much can be done to develop those qualities needed in leaders. This is a primary responsibility of the adult advisor, or group worker.

It is done partly by giving a child just as much responsibility as he can assume, no more, no less. To gauge the amount the adult must study the child closely. He must help the child to feel satisfaction in carrying responsibility. He praises the child, permits him certain privileges, gives him a feeling of being "grown up". All normal children crave this. Naturally, each child differs in his rate of development.

The adult urges the child to teach others what he knows. The child must learn to use his gifts for the benefit of the group. Simple principles of democratic government are explained, so that the child may understand that an elected representative expounds the opinion of the group, not his own.

The idea of common good is explained so that the child may understand how it can be achieved by each contributing his best to the group activities and objectives.

The adult restrains some children, urges others into prominence; explains that "bossing" and "bullying" are not leadership. Insofar as possible the adult permits the group to discipline itself in matters of leadership as in all other areas.

In some children's groups the total group is sub-divided into several small units as in the "patrol system" used by Scouts. These units elect their own child-leader who works with the adult advisor on matters that concern the whole group. The child leader is responsible for gathering the opinions of each member of his small unit and representing them in planning for the total group. This is an elementary form of representative government which spreads the opportunity for more members to gain leadership experience. It differs from committee responsibility. Committees may also function in groups which use the "patrol system".

This system is useful in some adult groups, also, depending upon the nature and organization of their work.

As groups advance in age the position of the adult advisor becomes less prominent and may disappear.

b. Recognition. Leaders are entitled to some recognition of the honor their office carries. They usually have a certain title. They may wear a badge, or insignia denoting their title or position. The use of such badges is not only for purposes of honoring the leader, but for administrative convenience, showing quickly who is in a position of responsibility, not only to group members but also to those outside the group. Special privileges may be allowed the leader. These,

however, should not be so comprehensive as to set him too far apart from the group, and should be granted him only with the consent of the group members.

c. Term of Office. In a natural group a leader maintains his position as long as the group permits. In a formed group, or "organized" group there is always a definite term of office. This may be a matter of a few weeks in a children's group. In adult groups it is usually for one or two years. The constitution should define the term of office and state whether or not the leader is eligible for re-election. The adult advisor of a children's group often referred to as "leader" should have a term of office defined by the agency or institution which has formed the children's group. Such advisors are often volunteers, and, if satisfactory to both the group and the agency, frequently continue in such positions for years.

d. Election. All-officers of groups are chosen in accordance with democratic principles, by secret ballot. Ordinarily, this is written. With children, or those unable to write, it may be done by having a non-participant call out the names of those nominated, while members keep their eyes closed. The members vote by raising their hands when the name of their candidate is called out.

It is important to teach people how to choose good leaders. For this reason we allow children to elect child leaders freely. The adult does not interfere even when he thinks the children's choice may be unwise. Actually, what seems to be an unwise choice may turn out to be a good one. If not, the adult permits the children to learn by experience the effects of poor leadership, while doing all he can to assist the elected child to function as a good leader. Children can learn by such mistakes, and in any case the results are not apt to be too serious. It is better to make a mistake at twelve years of age than at 25, and if we do not permit children to exercise their choice they will not learn the wisdom required to make a good selection.

Children, as well as adults frequently make the error of thinking an outstanding person in one field can be equally expert in another. They may find out that the boy who is so prominent in athletics is irresponsible in organizing a hike or a party, or does not carry out the wishes of a group in regard to plans they have voted upon. Adults make similar mistakes if they have not learned to analyze the qualifications of a certain person for a certain position. Our leaders, being human, cannot be perfect. They have strengths and weaknesses. They have knowledge in some fields but not in all. When we seek a leader we must first determine the quality of personality and the knowledge needed for the job, and then try to find the person who possesses them as fully as possible. A leader in the field of aeronautics may know nothing of international affairs, a leader in the field of science may be totally uninformed in religion, a leader in education may know nothing of agriculture. Therefore, we choose the person whose knowledge in the field entitles him to respect. If, in addition to his expert knowledge of this subject, he possesses qualities of leadership, he will influence large numbers of people.

Such leaders will make wide use of consultants who are experts in matters in which the leader is not well informed. The quality and quantity of these consultants often determine the calibre of the total program of the leader.

e. Techniques. The democratic leader is the servant of the group. He must act upon their wishes, in the way determined by them. If he does not, he will not be re-elected at the end of his term. Democratic groups expect their leaders to make some mistakes, and make allowances for this. However, if the mistakes are too great or too frequent, the leader loses prestige with the group and they will no longer regard him as fit for leadership of their group. He must gather group opinion and act upon it to the best of his ability. He may measure the group opinion against his own ideas, try to point out to the group a better way of doing things, use his position to try to influence the group opinion. However, in the end he must do as the group votes, or face the loss of his position as leader.

A truly social minded leader will not use fraud, deceit or trickery to gain his ends. Since group work aims toward social education its leaders can use only social methods. Anti-social means -- hatred, cheating, etc., lead to anti-social sentiments and goals. We cannot make the ends justify the means. Both must be social, in social education.

The group work leader is supportive, not punitive. He tries to make it possible for each group member to do his best at all times. When a member fails in this the leader tries to analyze the reason, and to help the member overcome the situation, so that he may make a better contribution to the group. It is not enough for the leader to feel that the group's welfare is of major concern to him. He must also make the group feel that he feels this way.

The leader guides the group with more or less strength, as needed. This means he furnishes ideas, opinions and direction to the group when it seems to lack these. He always offers these, does not impose them.

The group workers position is one of indirect leadership. He avoids becoming the center of attention because he knows that group interaction will stop if he does.

By this alternating assertiveness and withdrawal he provides opportunity for the members to develop as much individual responsibility as possible. He makes them not only acceptant or appreciative of democratic techniques, but actually demanding of them.

f. Qualities of Leaders. What kind of people do we seek for our democratic leaders? We cannot judge by their formal education since we have not found that there is any correlation at present between higher education and skilled leadership. We all know very effective leaders who have very little schooling. We usually will find, however, that the leader has at least the equivalent education of the average member of his group. Groups have a tendency to choose bright people as leaders,

but it has not been demonstrated that the higher the I.Q. the more skilled the leader. We all know brilliant people who seem to have no leadership ability. Nor is leadership ability confined to any one race, sex or economic class. It develops, and can be more highly developed, everywhere.

Two characteristics are essential in leaders. One is the ability to initiate activity to keep it going. This helps to provide the momentum and continuity necessary to group action. The other is integrity, a word difficult to translate. It literally means "wholeness", "completeness" and implies inviolability. We say a man has integrity when he lives according to his principles which are clear to others, as well as to himself. His actions are consistent and therefore predictable. We usually know how he will react under a variety of conditions, including stress and temptation. Although we never can be entirely sure how a human being will act under all conditions, we have confidence that the man of integrity will usually live up to our expectation of him. Honesty is part of this picture, but not all of it. A man of integrity is always honest in high degree. He is also clear as to his attitude and those are founded on sufficient reflection of the question, not on emotional response. Integrity in a leader gives a group a sense of direction, as they know which way he is likely to turn and can prepare to follow him.

In addition to these two essentials, there are other abilities which furnish good leadership. We have mentioned making the group feel the leader's concern for its welfare. He must not only provide for the common welfare, but put its needs and interests ahead of his own. He does things with the group, as part of it, not only <u>for</u> the group as a part from it. His sense of timing is good. He knows when to propose action to the group, when to present the groups wishes to those outside, or above it.

The leader is an optimistic person. This means he sees hope of remedying the situation, however bad it seems at present. This is based on reality and hope, not on foolish avoidance of facts, or on day dreaming.

He must be able to withstand disappointment and frustration because these will often be his lot. More, he must support the group during it, for if he sinks into pessimism the group will sink, and he will lose his leadership. No one cares to follow a pessimistic leader.

The leader's qualities are positive and constructive. They point upward, to better things. His selfless devotion to his duty as leader wins him the respect and affection of the group. He respects them, too, as individuals who have rights which cannot be taken away from them.

On such leadership the democratic idea was founded and in the development os such leaders group work has an important part to play in the future.

4. Program Activities for Groups

The value of group membership is often rated by the casual observer according to the program of activities in progress. People say, "This is a good group, they have a full schedule of worthwhile activities." Members, too, often describe the group in terms of the current activity. Asked what the group is doing, they frequently say, "Hiking, conducting a clean-up campaign, studying better methods of farming, etc." That activities are not the fundamentally distinguishing feature of a group we shall discuss later. A program of interesting activities is vital to group life.

a. Principles. As mentioned in another discussion, since we are using group work as a method of social education it follows that the activities must be good in themselves, that they cannot be contrary to the law nor destructive of the common good. Within this limitation they may be anything the group wishes. The important point to remember is that they must reflect the needs and interests of the group. Unless they do, the group program will never get more than a half-hearted response from the members. The best way to insure a program meeting the interests of the group is to give the group responsibility for the planning. Simple as this sounds, many group workers and leaders appear unable to rely on the group for this.

One of the reasons given is that "the leader knows better than the group what would make a good program." It is true that a leader may be able to outline a series of activities that are worthwhile in themselves, but if the group does not feel interested, those activities will not have full participation by the group. For instance, the leader may decide that a study of music would be good for his group members. Viewed objectively, a study of music has a beneficial cultural effect upon most people. However, in a leisure time program one is not committed to doing only that which someone else thinks beneficial. The group might prefer to engage in a athletic program, or form a credit union, both worthwhile pursuits, but which obviously will not elevate the level of one's musical knowledge. The leader must remember that regardless of how he values music, individuals have a right to choose their leisure time activities and that many people lead a full and happy life with little or no appreciation of music.

Another reason given for not referring the planning of activities to the group that the group does not know what it wants to do. This is sometimes true of children groups, but may happen in adult groups. The members want to be in each other's company but seem to have little idea what they can do together. In this case, the group worker or leader is responsible for suggesting activities to the group. In a world so full of social, spiritual and material needs it would seem that any group of people could easily find an outlet for their time and energy in serving these. Not all groups have this inclination, however, but many look upon their free time as an opportunity to serve their own needs primarily, in recreation, intellectual pursuits, etc. In any case, the leader should suggest many possibilities to the group members but must let them choose. Only an autocrat would insist upon imposing his ideas consistently on the group, and in doing this

he would be losing the opportunity to assist the members to become free, independent individuals - the kind of people needed for a democratic society. Without freedom of choice there can be no spiritual growth.

b. Planning. In a small group the leader talks directly with all the members and makes them feel free to suggest activities. In a large group some kind of program committee is needed. This may be selected according to customary procedures. (Dealt with in another section of this course). Where large groups are divided into stable small sub-groups as in the Scout patrol system, the member-leaders of these sub-groups act as a program-planning committee. In any case, the principle remains the same. The program committee's job is to feel out the ideas and suggestions of all the members, coordinate these in such a way as to incorporate the interests of all, and present a tentative program to the whole group for its acceptance or rejection. If the interests of one member are not represented in the total program, the member will, in all likelihood, withdraw from the group, which is his privilege. His other choice is to remain in the group, and to try to influence other members in favor of his ideas.

Even when the group has a number of ideas for program activities, the leader or group worker may still make additional suggestions. This is more necessary in a children's group, where a variety of activities should be included and where the leader is responsible for widening the horizons of the members. (This is why we need people with a richness of ideas and backgrounds to act as leaders). The main thing to remember is that the leader does not impose his ideas or compel the group to execute them. The final choice of activity must be made by the group, if democracy is to prevail.

The group must have at least one interest in common if it is to stay together. This may be specific, such as an interest in photography, or more general, such as an interest in serving the poor. How close the common interest brings the members to one another depends also upon the factor of homogeneity, discussed earlier in another session, and the degree to which the group program satisfies its members. Devotion to the leader is also a strong factor here and will frequently keep a group together in spite of some conflict among its members.

c. Types. Since group work has as its objective the best total development of the individual, it is to be expected that it must emphasize those types of activities most likely to contribute to that development. Any activity may be recreational, religious, or educational. All of these develop social attitudes and train for good citizenship. Some groups may choose one or two, others all three.

All activities should instill in the members a sense of right values. The use of the word "right" implies a criterion. We instill "right" values when we help a person to esteem a thing in the ratio to which it helps him toward his highest purpose in life.

One well understood use of group work is the cultivation of worthwhile hobbies. Here we emphasize those which may "grow" with the individual rather than those which are limited to a younger age group. Active games are excellent for children, but they should not overbalance even a children's program, if we expect the individual to develop interest beyond the age at which physically strenuous activities lose their appeal. Interest in nature study, art, music, etc., have no age limitations.

We emphasize creative activities, - those which utilize original expression rather than slavish imitation. These provide the release and refreshment which are so important in recreation. Crafts, gardening, dramatics, writing, etc., may be included here.

Prominent among the social qualitites is that of selflessness. All religions emphasize this in their doctrine, as they teach worship of a Supreme Being and service to one's fellow man. Altruistic activities which require one to put one's time, talents and energies into action for the common good are excellent in group work. These have an endless variety, from giving an entertainment for the orphanage, to building bridges for one's village. Cooperation, among members and with other groups should be the keynote, rather than competition. The stronger, more gifted, more able must learn to utilize their endowments for the benefit of the less fortunate.

Group work, being founded on a democratic basis, stands for the dignity of the individual. It, therefore, recognizes the equal rights of all, regardless of race, nationality, creed or economic class. Activities which teach acceptance of individuals different from oneself have an important place in all programs. Even though groups are homogeneous in respect to the factors mentioned above, cooperative activities with other groups should be stressed, and basic principles, enunciated by the leader, put into practice.

Activities which require participation of the whole group are better than those which may be done by isolated individuals, since we are teaching people to work together. This applies to games, dramactics, etc., as well as to service activities.

Eating together is important for its socializing effect. A group should try to have light refreshments served at every meeting.

Money has such high prestige value in modern civilization, that we cannot overlook the opportunity in group work to teach proper attitudes toward it. Groups should determine in advance what program activities they can afford, and make their plans accordingly. Dues, the amount of which is determined by the members, are collected regularly by the treasurer and deposited in a common fund, an accounting of which is made at every meeting. No leader or group worker may spend this money unless so specifically authorized by the group vote, even in a children's group. In the younger age groups the money should be collected by the treasurer

and turned over to the adult adviser, but may not be spent by the latter except as noted above. This training in the handling of group funds is an important contribution which group work makes to future citizenry.

d. Age Groups. From years of experience with groups in various countries, we have learned that at certain ages certain activities have more appeal than others. Therefore, some general statements as to what interests we may expect to find, may prove of value. Note that these age ranges are approximate and should never be taken as exactly right for one individual. The whole range may shift up or down, according to the cultural pattern of the geographical region.

Ages 7-12 has a short interest span and should have a wide variety of activities. Manual activities are extremely important, but these should not require "fine" work with small tools, which may cause eye and nerve strain. This age group usually prefers companions of its own sex, and we rarely find coeducational play groups. It is not particularly interested in formed "club" organizations, except as an imitation of older groups. It cares little for parliamentary procedure or lengthy discussions.

Ages 13-16. More club organization and opportunity for discussion are sought by this age group. There is more interest in the opposite sex and frequently an expressed wish to have coeducational activities. The latter may be cooperative service projects, hikes, trips, etc., rather than parties or dances, since the latter require a knowledge of social graces not always found at this age.

The same activities found in younger groups - games, crafts, singing, etc., are enjoyed, but there is a longer attention span and a greater definitiveness of purpose. "Team" games have increased importance.

Ages 16-20. This age group thinks of itself, and rightfully, as "youth" and is interested in problems as they concern youth. It likes discussion and club organization. It is interested in coeducational activities and many individuals of this age will not join one-sex groups. It is especially interested in vocational exploration and should have frequent and informal contact with persons who can give advice as to the training and personal qualifications needed for different types of work.

Social problems, international affairs and politics furnish topics of vital interest for discussion.

Manual activities are still popular but the members are more inclined to do them independently, and demand of themselves a higher degree of skill.

Personal behavior and one's effect upon others have an absorbing interest for this age. Activities which provide guidance in these areas are important.

All the above age groups should be provided with an adult guide, or advisor, who meets constantly with the group and helps in planning the program.

Over 20. Above 20 years individuals are ordinarily regarded as adults and their group life is quite different from that of children or adolescents. Adults do not join groups unless the potential program of activity is one that interests them. The "collective" urge, which sends children into groups without a well-defined program is no longer a strong motivation. Adults join groups to learn something or to carry out an interest which they cannot do so well alone. Persons who have had considerable group education have developed by adulthood many interests which they can and do carry out alone. Unless an individual has acquired such resources, his early group training has been faulty.

Leadership for adult groups is provided from among the membership. The "advisor" has become less and less important. An organization which works with adults usually provides an advisor who "stands by" until the group seeks his guidance. If the group is a study club, the sponsoring organization should be able to suggest to it persons to act as discussion leaders who are well-informed on the subject under discussion. If the group is seeking to learn an activity, such as cooking, dramatics, folk dancing, etc., organizations should provide teachers. The role of these teachers is quite different from that of the adult leader of a younger group, and the relationships fall more into a pattern resembling those of an informal classroom.

e. Use of Community Resources. Even with children's groups the adult advisor cannot expect to provide instruction and information on every subject or activity in which the group expresses interest. Therefore, he turns to institutions such as museums and libraries, to organizations and to other agencies in the community for help. Frequently, he asks a person who may be an expert in one subject to come into the group meetings for a limited number of visits to teach that subject. These people usually receive no compensation except the joy of sharing their enthusiasm with others who are interested. Such persons are known as "program volunteers," "resource persons," "program consultants," etc. They do not replace the leader or advisor in his role of "foremost companion" to the group.

In seeking outside assistance we look to organizations, schools, clubs and tradespeople, artists, etc. When we approach them we must explain the level of present information found in our group, the size and age of the group and the approximate number of hours which we hope to have the assistant with us.

f. Distinctiveness of Groups. As we have seen, people all over the world, are interested in similar programs of activities. What, then, is the difference between one group program and another? Should we seek to promote and join the one which offers the best camping program, for example? It is safe to assume that the average 12-year-old in any country would enjoy the experience of a well-equipped, well-organized camp where he might find a wide variety of activities designed to hold his interest.

We must learn to look beyond the obvious. A far deeper distinction between one group program and another is the philosophy of its leadership - the

objective toward which the group is being guided. Important as activities are, the attitudes and opinions fostered by the leaders are still paramount, and constitute the ultimate goals towards which the group members advance.

5. Primer of Group Work

a. In group work we try to teach people to understand each other, to get along together, and to unit their efforts toward a common goal.

b. The primary objective of group work is to develop the individual by means of the group.

c. Groups are distinguished, not only by their activities, but more fundamentally by their philosophy.

d. Groups ought to have at least one common interest and several points of homogeneity.

e. The club group resembles the good family in its concern for the individual welfare but does not assume the prerogatives which belong solely to a family group.

f. As with families, groups which meet often have more influence on the behavior of the individual members than do those which come together only occasionally other things being equal.

g. Club groups should be small so that the leader can know well each of the members. Large groups may be divided into sub-groups under the direction of an assistant leader.

h. The leader uses the interactions among group members to guide the group processes.

i. It is easier to change attitudes and opinions by reason and logic when the group is a small one.

j. A leader who acts consistently in the interests of one special sub-group is mis-using the authority which is enturstod to him by the whole group.

k. The leader must always conduct himself in a way that merits the respect of the group.

l. Devotion to the leader will keep a group together in spite of dissentions among the members.

m. A leader must have (a) the ability to initiate activity, and (b) integrity so that the group will have confidence in his behavior under stress.

n. The leader must consult the group before making any important decision concerning its activities.

o. Opportunity should be provided for the development of leadership among group members.

p. Cooperation rather than competition should be stressed. The more skilled must learn to assume responsibility for the less able.

q. Groups ought to eat together frequently because eating is a socializing activity.

r. Greatest benefits will be derived from group activities if the members attend meetings voluntarily, without outside compulsion.

s. Learning to share equipment will help to develop patience and cooperation. Preference should be given to projects which require a combination of individual efforts.

t. New program activities are developed on the basis of current knowledge of the needs and interests of the group members.

u. Creative activities release tension and provide legitimate channels of self expression.

v. Pleasant experiences enjoyed together will give satisfaction in group membership but a sense of accomplishment is also necessary.

w. Club groups may avoid becoming too self-centered if they include service to others as part of their regular program.

x. Each member of the group must understand fully the purpose of the group as well as its code of ethics.

y. An individual must feel at ease in a group before he can contribute fully to it.

z. If an individual is not proud of belonging to a certain group, membership in it cannot have a beneficial effect upon him.

aa. The average man reaches his fullest development in association with others, but cannot attain this in an atmosphere that is sterile or hostile.

bb. The action of each member affects the group and in turn each member is affected by the action of the group.

cc. In the true democracy the Moral Law is considered superior to the opinion of any one group. Therefore, although the majority opinion may prevail on a certain question, it does not follow that this majority is in the right.

dd. Ten persons well organized can generate more dynamics than a hundred who do not have a clear idea of their goal or the means to obtain it.